



Bay Area Dioxins Project



Association of Bay Area
Governments

Summary of Discussions TASK FORCE MEETING February 13, 2003

Attending the meeting were:

Carrie Beckstedt, City of Berkeley*

Robin Breuer, City/County of San Francisco*

JoAnna Bullock, ABAG Staff

Betsy Elzufon, LWA+

Pamela Evans, Alameda County*

Kelly Moran, TDC Environmental+

Debbie Raphael, City/County of San Francisco*

Michael Smith, ABAG Staff

Julie Weiss, City of Palo Alto*

(+ Task Force consultant, * Task Force member)

Welcome/Introductions

JoAnna Bullock convened the meeting and welcomed Task Force members.

Public Comment Period - Speakers

- No members of the public were present.

Information Sharing

The Bay Area Regional Refuse Conference – (415) 257-3353

Julie Weiss stated that, at a recent meeting, CAPPO was looking for sustainable products that will save cities money, or cost only a little extra, as a way to continue to promote sustainability during the statewide budget problems. The availability of cost-competitive Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) and Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) paper was part of the discussion.

Debbie Raphael stated that a representative of INFORM is going to have two staff trainings for city purchasing staff. The trainings will focus on raising awareness of products that are available that reduce the production of toxins and promote recycling. Debbie wanted other jurisdictions to know that INFORM does make staff available for such trainings.

Dioxins Conference

JoAnna Bullock asked the group if they would want to do another dioxins conference this year.

Pam Evans thought that the 2002 conference was very informative and would like to have another one. Pam continued by suggesting that a segment be added that would provide a forum for jurisdictions to share the progress they have made on the dioxin issue and at what stage in the process of reducing the production of dioxins they are at.

Kelly Moran thought that it was a good idea to have another conference as the last one was a really good opportunity to get updates on what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and

the California Environmental Protection Agency are doing in relation to the dioxin issue. She stated that coverage of the issue through their standard public information outlets is poor.

Julie Weiss thought that an outreach effort to jurisdictions that did not attend the 2002 conference would help the group's efforts to disseminate information on dioxins. JoAnna followed up by suggesting that jurisdictions participating in the Task Force could "adopt" other jurisdictions as mentors to encourage their participation in the 2003 conference and on the dioxin issue in general. Potential jurisdictions would be identified by Task Force members who know of someone who is committed and actively working either on the dioxin issue or persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBT) issues in general.

Survey of Cities – Needs Assessment

Debbie Raphael suggested that the Task Force expand its focus to cover other PBTs along with dioxin. San Francisco is currently working on the issue of dental mercury.

Betsy Elzufon noted that mercury already has a lot of exposure through water pollution groups and agencies and that many jurisdictions are already looking into ways to reduce mercury pollution. Many of the jurisdictions are evaluating similar approaches to address the issue.

Debbie also suggested that the Task Force consider getting involved in E-waste efforts. The production and disposal of computer equipment produces a number of PBTs and changes in government purchasing policies could increase pressure for less toxic computer equipment. She also suggested looking into promoting right-to-know efforts so jurisdictions would require some sort of notification as to what hazardous chemicals are in products when making purchasing decisions.

Pam Evans suggested that the Task Force partner with the Health Care Pollution Prevention project to support/continue trainings for facility inspectors. She also encouraged continued sharing of resources for the Task Force's current medical waste and diesel projects so that expansion of focus does not dilute current dioxin focused efforts. When asked if the Alameda County resolution targets specific chemicals, Pam responded that there is a committee that is currently developing a list and identifying priorities.

Julie Weiss suggested that the Task Force identify "no excuses" things that local governments can do to change their purchasing policies and actions. The group could do outreach to people actively involved in pollution prevention in local government to get the ball rolling in their jurisdictions or implement policy changes for their agency. She would also prefer that the group not dilute the focus on dioxins. Maybe identify a short list of three things that jurisdictions can do right now. Julie also suggested that the group work to identify who is doing what and where in relation to PBTs and identify links to see where the Task Force and other groups can compliment and support one another's efforts. She stated that there is one group working on the issue of endocrine receptors in the Bay Area.

Betsy stated that the dioxin issue is still somewhat new for most jurisdictions and wondered how the group could work to make them more comfortable with the issue.

Kelly Moran gave examples of two things that jurisdictions could do that would not cost them money (given the current budget situation), fireplaces and diesel emissions. The efforts would require staff time but would not require the jurisdictions to spend money on products or new infrastructure. Julie stated that, through Palo Alto's experience, hand towel and toilet paper alternatives actually cost less than, or the same as, existing products. Jurisdictions would not have to spend more money than they already do for materials they already need.

Julie also suggested that the Task Force develop a model PBT policy for the region as a way to affect how jurisdictions purchase specific items.

JoAnna Bullock mentioned an EPA project she worked with that developed a “toolkit” of things that business could do to promote sustainability. The list started with “low-hanging fruit” and got more complex and significant as one went down the list. She wondered what experience the Task Force members had with “toolkits.”

Debbie stated that jurisdictions like to have a range of options when considering approaches to an issue. The most important part was to find the right person to shepherd the process. It is also important to provide “hand-holding” assistance to that person early on. She also suggested that a toolkit have a list of jurisdictions that have undertaken the suggested action and how they did it.

Kelly thought that, given the current budget climate, that items in a toolbox focus on cost-effective/cost-saving measures that also happen to be good for the environment. If a list is developed, be sure to focus on things that jurisdictions can do for themselves.

On the issue of broadening the focus of the Task Force, Betsy asked if it would be appropriate to move beyond dioxins, and if so, can the group do that? Kelly responded that so far as she knew, there was nothing restricting them to dioxins. However, it was the ABAG resolution on dioxins that started the project. Pam suggested that maybe the group should continue to focus on the four projects the Task Force is currently working on and not dilute current efforts. Julie said that there were good ideas that were all over the map and would like the group to set a focus and develop a work plan for the next six months to a year.

JoAnna asked the group if they thought it would be good for the Task Force to develop materials in CFO-/purchaser-speak so that advocates within city government can take them to their purchasing and finance personnel when trying to change purchasing policies. Debbie thought it might be valuable to have group members bring a purchasing person from their jurisdictions with them to some meetings.

Kelly asked what kind of activities the group wanted to take on. The two focuses she suggested was 1) education and training with a workshop, resource/article/info sharing between Task Force members and with the region and a project report outlining the dioxins pollution prevention accomplishments of the participating municipalities and 2) implementing projects with jurisdictions participating in the Task Force taking the lead and then using their experience to influence/lobby other jurisdictions.

Pam suggested that the group not discount the value of “hand-holding” technical support where representatives and consultants of the Task Force sit down with members of different jurisdictions to try and get them to implement projects and/or policies suggested by the group.

JoAnna suggested one person in the region that might act as a “champion” within their jurisdiction. JoAnna gave the group two weeks to come up with a list of people that might act as champions within their jurisdictions. ABAG staff would then compile a regional list from which the group would extract a short list of potential champions. The next step would involve trying to arrange meet-n-greet meetings to get them interested in the projects proposed by the Task Force.

On the Task Force budget, JoAnna stated that she is still trying to get a complete budget picture from the ABAG finance staff but will have the information soon. Kelly stated that once the budget is clear, it will help the group to identify what can be realistically done. To help identify

what could realistically be done, Betsy indicated that she could develop a cost/ brief workplan to do three types of technical assistance: 1) working with Alameda County to expand their paper purchasing, 2) working with an agency to start up a paper purchasing program, 3) working with an agency (Palo Alto) to implement some PVC purchasing actions. JoAnna promised to coordinate with Betsy and Kelly to draft a budget and workplan for the next phase of the project.

Project Update – Paper and PVC

Betsy Elzufon reported that the paper project was completed a while ago. She said that the PVC project was waiting for the Laguna Honda case study to be completed. She stated that purchasing specifications had been developed and asked the San Francisco representative what the status was on purchasing materials. Robin Breuer responded that the project is still going forward and that meetings were being held to go over the ordinance and materials, as some of the initial working perceptions have proven difficult.

Project Update – Medical Waste

Kelly Moran reported she had completed the draft materials for the medical waste project. The materials were more difficult to produce and took longer than planned to write because the State Department of Health Services has not been as helpful as expected.

The following is a list of the draft materials presented at the meeting. .

- Managing Medical Waste: Important Choices for Acute Care Hospitals – focuses on issue of incineration and autoclaving to dispose of medical waste. Hospital staff and managers are the target audience.
- Frequently Asked Questions: Autoclaving an Acute Care Hospital's Regulated Medical Waste – municipalities are the target audience. Intended to answer questions municipalities may have about recommending autoclaving to hospitals in their jurisdiction.
- Permit Requirements for Installing Autoclaves at Acute Care Hospitals – a collection of the most common permits required for the installation and use of autoclaves. Hospital staff and managers are the target audience.
- Vendor List: Medical Waste Treatment – general information for both hospitals and municipalities.
- Resources for Health Care Pollution Prevention – publications and websites focusing on health care pollution prevention issues. General information for both hospitals and municipalities.
- Autoclaving Cost Worksheet – basic worksheet that allows hospitals to plug their own information in when analyzing the costs of installing and operating an autoclave. Hospital staff and managers are the target audience.

The Task Force agreed to a two-week review period with comments due by February 28, 2003. Kelly asked that the reviewers focus on what may cause problems for local municipalities and on how the information relates to the project itself. She also stated that there would be some peer review of the materials going on at the same time.

Kelly noted that the approved workplan for the project calls for her to attend meetings to be set up by Oakland, Palo Alto, Alameda County and Berkeley (Alta Bates and Berkeley Health Department) to discuss the project. Municipalities should be thinking about when they would like to schedule their meetings. She also noted that the overall project budget situation will likely limit remaining activities on this task, which cannot be funded by the U.S. EPA grant..

Health Care Pollution Prevention – Inspector Training

Pam Evans gave an update on the Health Care Pollution Prevention group. She noted that the group is transitioning to give the advocate groups involved a greater leadership role in working with hospitals. She stated that the upcoming Inspector Training Workshop was expected to be a partnership of the ABAG Dioxins Task Force and Health Care Pollution Prevention and other agencies that would address a wide range of issues currently facing hospitals. The thought was that the more inclusive focus would attract more people to the event. (Draft agenda included as an attachment)

Robin Breuer stated that the agenda was good but suggested that they would attract a larger audience if the workshop was limited to four hours. She also wanted to make sure that the person providing the opening remarks would tie all aspects of the workshop together so that participants do not leave early, thinking that other topics are not related to their specific area of responsibility or interest.

Pam stated that the Task Force budget would decide how diverse and robust the agenda and speaker list would be. She requested that the group provide feedback on the proposed agenda before February 25, 2003.

Public Comment Period - Speakers

- No members of the public were present.

Adjournment

Next meeting:

- March 20th or 25th of 2003, 10:00am, ABAG Office, Conference Room B